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DEPARTMENT FOR PA, NEA/ARN, INR/IC/CD, INR/R/MR:STHIBEAULT AND
JMCCARTER, VOA NEWS CA, NEA/PPD:CBOURGEOIS, AZAIBACK, AND
AFERNANDEZ, IIP/G/NEA-SA MDAVIDSON
WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC
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TAGS: KMDR PREL KPAQ OPRC SY

SUBJECT: Palestinian Territories, Lebanon, Syria/Israel, Iraq
(6/14)

¶11. Summary: Syrian papers on June 14 quoted an official Syrian source as saying on June 13 that the Syrian government and Syrian people are concerned about intra-Palestinian fighting and violence. "Fighting among the Palestinian brothers will only serve the interests of the enemies of the Palestinian cause and the enemies of the Arab nation," the source said. "Syria appeals to the Palestinian brothers to stop the violence completely, calling upon them to be fully aware that Palestinian national unity alone will be their savior and is the only path to restoration of rights and achievement of national goals," the source added.

On the assassination of Lebanese MP Walid Eido, pro-government newspapers featured a brief SANA report about the assassination without further comment. Government-owned Tishreen featured the following statement by President Lahoud on June 13: "This heinous crime, which has coincided with progress in the efforts and contacts to find a solution to the current political crisis, makes us again call persistently to unite ranks and deprive the enemies of Lebanon of any chance, because they target the security and stability of this country." Papers also cited a statement by Parliament Speaker Birri calling on the Lebanese people to be alert and cautious of the "fingers of sedition that are weaving their conspiracy." Independent al-Watan accused the ruling majority in the Lebanese parliament of assassinating MP Eido. Al-Watan's Chief Editor Waddah Abd-Rabbo, in his daily commentary, stated five reasons behind the Eido assassination (see editorial block quote below).

Papers also reported two phone calls received by FM Mouallem on July 13. One was from Danish Foreign Minister Per Stig Moeller on the situation in the region, particularly in Palestine and Lebanon, and ways to revive the Middle East peace process based on the Madrid terms of reference and the land-for-peace principle to achieve security and stability in the region. The second call came from Jordanian FM Abd-al-Ilah al-Khatib on bilateral relations and current developments in the Palestinian territories, reiterating the need to stop intra-Palestinian fighting.

End of summary.

¶12. Selected Headlines:

"The ruling majority in Lebanon sacrifices Walid Eido" (Independent

al-Watan, 6/14)

"Assassination of MP Eido in Beirut. Lahoud denounces the act. Lahoud: The crime must unify Lebanese ranks. Berri and Hezbollah warn against 'the fingers of sedition'" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 6/14)

"Syrian official source: Syria follows with anxiety what is going on among Palestinians: National unity is the savior" (Government-owned Tishreen, 6/14)

"FM Mouallem receives two phone calls, from Danish FM Muller and Jordanian FM Khatib, on developments in the region and revival of the peace process" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 6/14)

"Arab foreign ministers will discuss developments in the Palestinian territories in Cairo on July 16" (Government-owned Tishreen, 6/14)

"Abbas warns against a collapse in the Palestinian situation. Scores of Palestinians killed and injured in clashes between Fateh and Hamas. 40 Palestinian security troops cross border from Gaza, seeking safety in Egypt" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 6/14)

"A UN report: Sanctions against Palestinians have destroyed Palestinian society.... The International Quartet Committee is complying fully with Washington's will" (Government-owned Al-a'th, 6/14)

"Italian FM Prodi calls for an effective European role in the Middle East peace process" (Government-owned Tishreen, 6/14)

"Bombing of the Shrine of the two Imams in Sammurra. Iraqi figures: The occupation is held responsible... The occupation aims to create sedition" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 6/14)

13. Editorial Block Quotes:

"Reasons for Assassinating Eido"

Waddah Abd Rabbo, chief editor of independent al-Watan, wrote (6/14): "I personally accuse the ruling majority in Lebanon of victimizing Eido to proceed with its destructive scheme to internationalize Lebanon. There are many reasons for this:

"First the Terje Roed-Larsen report to the UN Security Council accusing Damascus of smuggling arms to Lebanon and violating resolution 1559 according to information Larsen received from his friend al-Saniora..."

"The second factor is the visit to Lebanon by French envoy Jean Claude Cosron and Paris' call on the Lebanese parties to sit at the negotiating table, which the al-Hariri Block rejects and Washington is disturbed about....

"To foil French envoy Cosron's mission and block any French move in Lebanon, it was necessary to victimize a Lebanese figure to reshuffle the cards....

"The third factor was news about a visit scheduled to Tehran by the Saudi Foreign Minister and talk about a reconciliation plan to form a national unity government in Lebanon with Saudi-Iranian support, which was neither unwelcome by the ruling Lebanese majority nor by the White House....

"With the endorsement of the International Tribunal the ruling majority felt greatly confused, as it has lost its excuses and accusations against the opposition. It needed a new act of assassination to reinstate its criticisms of the opposition as being loyal to Syria and Iran so as to enflame the domestic crisis and block a national unity government.

"The fifth reason was to divert attention from events in Nahr al-Bared, especially in the wake of the many reports incriminating

Saied al-Hariri in the financing of Fath al-Islam to form a Sunni army to fight Hizbollah...."

"The Magic Recipe for Peace"

Isam Dari, Chief Editor of government-owned Tishreen, wrote (6/14): "It is said that there is now a debate in Israel between two political trends, one calling for dialogue with Syria and the other standing exactly on the opposite side....

"It is as if they want to convince us of two things: The first is that there is a trend in favor of peace and another expressing reservations. The second is that Israel is seriously inclined toward dialogue, negotiations, and peace.

"But no matter how much we lie to ourselves, we are unable to accept that the Tel Aviv leaders are serious in their proposals or that they really know the true translation of the word 'peace.' "Without going into detail, we point out that after 1973 Israel began to pursue a new deceptive policy based on accepting peace in form and theory and rejecting it in practice and action. Relying on strategic allies, it used all its power and influence to thwart every international effort or initiative that could lead to peace or to a settlement, unless this settlement fulfilled its ambitions and was a fragile settlement incapable of withstanding any test....

"Let us recall Rabin's pledge [to withdraw from the Golan] and the evasion of the requirements of peace by Barak, Peres, Netanyahu, Sharon, Olmert, and all the leaders of the Israeli

military-political establishment. And let us ask: Why did Israel torpedo the understandings that were reached on the Syrian track, when about 80 percent of the 'peace agreement' was accomplished?

"If Israel is serious, the first thing it must do is abandon deception and acknowledge Rabin's pledge, which is a suitable foundation for the resumption of the peace process and the accomplishment of the remaining 20 percent of the 'peace agreement' in a way that returns land and rights to their owners and ends the state of war and aggression that has existed for six decades. This does not need a divine miracle....

"This is the magic peace recipe for those who want peace. Unless the contrary has been proven, what Israel is proposing is nothing but vague and meaningless talk, nothing more than trial balloons and a new attempt to portray Israel as a peace-loving country seeking peace...."

"Who Is the Beneficiary?"

Umar Jaftali, a commentator in government-owned Tishreen, wrote (6/14): "There is no doubt that nothing pleases Israel more than this futile intra-Palestinian fight, which is destroying everything Palestinians have built through the bitter struggle against the occupation and the various political activities that brought the Palestinian cause to international fora, especially the United Nations.

"This fighting is very serious, as it crosses all the red lines that prevent the shedding of Palestinian blood at the hands of Palestinians themselves. It is also serious in terms of its reflection on the international political position toward the Palestinian people, a position that has begun to sense the injustice done to Palestinians as a result of the occupation and Israeli practices. This is shown through the demonstrations that were staged in Washington and London two days ago, where the demonstrators stressed their solidarity with the Palestinians and their condemnation of Israel's racism....

"It is really regrettable that brothers are killing each other while the Israeli enemy plans to kill those who survive the fighting from the two sides. What is happening gives the enemy a chance to rest and enjoy this fighting, which helps it save effort and money and perhaps spares it human losses if all the Palestinians unite in the face of Israeli practices.

It is really regrettable that things have reached this point. Everyone must be alert to the need for cohesion, consolidation of national solidarity, and unity behind the elected government so that it can address the important issues, primarily the occupation and siege."

"A Stage Ends, Another Is To Start"

Mahdi Dakhllallah, former Information Minister, commented in government-owned Tishreen, (6/14): "The stage that began with the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq has ended and the signs of a new one have begun to appear....

"No one can predict where events will be heading in the near future. All possibilities are open. But there is a clear fact: The arbitrary and arrogant policies that the region and the rest of the world have witnessed in the past few years have proven a failure, and the symbols of the past stage have started to collapse one after the other....

"The new leaders in London, Paris, and the US Congress are showing more objectivity and rationalism, not because of their love for

justice, but because of the new reality in the region, which was created by the resistance in Iraq, Lebanon, and Palestine and by the challenge of countries that reject hegemony, such as Syria and Iran....

"The next stage will still be difficult, but the most difficult thing the region can witness is now behind us."

Roebuck